



**THE NEW JERSEY  
ITALIAN  
and  
ITALIAN AMERICAN  
HERITAGE COMMISSION**



**REPORT and PROGRAM  
for the**

**April 23, 2005**

**Italian Liberation Day Commemoration**

*To Honor the Service and Sacrifice  
of New Jersey's Italian American  
Veterans, Police Forces and Men and Women Under Arms*

## **Overview of 2005 Liberation Day**

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and its partners hosted a successful and dignified commemoration of Italian Liberation Day on April 23, 2005 at the Nicholas Music Center at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The celebration of Italian Liberation Day is designed to remember the shared sacrifices and the bonds of friendship between the citizens of Italy, the United States and the State of New Jersey. The event is the only statewide commemoration of its kind in the State of New Jersey and has been organized for the past several years.

## **Commission Partners**

As the event is intended for the Italian American community of the entire State, the Commission reached out to various Italian American organizations for planning, financial and logistical support. This year eight organizations joined the Italian Statewide Events Planning Committee, chaired by Mario Marano: the New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation, the Italian American Police Society of New Jersey, the Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO, the Bianchi Lodge of the Order of the Sons of Italy, the Ribera Italian American Club, the Ocean County United Italian Club, the Seaside Italian Club, and the Federation of Italian American Societies. The distribution of these organizations reflected the geographical diversity of Italian Americans in New Jersey from North, Central and South Jersey.

## **2005 Theme**

Since Liberation Day is similar to a form of Memorial Day in the Republic of Italy that honors the sacrifice of those Italians and Allied troops that gave their lives to free Italian from Fascist occupation, this year's event was designed to honor New Jersey's veterans and police forces that continue to serve and protect the State of New Jersey and the United States of America. As a result the Commission elected to honor certain organizations that are representative of these individuals – the New Jersey Italian American War Veterans; the Italian American Police Society of New Jersey; and the Association of Italian Carabinieri.

## **Selection of Music and Poetry Reading**

The event was also designed to incorporate various musical interludes that would thematically reflect the Italian and Italian American bonds of friendship and provide a repertoire of different musical styles interesting to a wide audience range. The Commission invited the Monmouth County Italian American Marching Band to play music with military themes; tenor Mr. Nino Rossano to sing the Italian and American anthems, as well as Italian folk music; guitarist Dr. Richard Sorrentino, who performed Italian popular songs about soldiers and the pride of being Italian; musician Joseph Coco, who performed songs in English about his heritage and reflections on the Italian homeland; and soprano Anna Maria Stefanelli, who performed arias from Puccini and

Verdi, to inspire the audience. To elevate the cultural component of the event, a series of Italian poetry readings were performed by a professor at Rutgers University, Cav. Alessandro Vettori.

## **Selection of Speakers**

As this event is a formal statewide event, speakers were carefully selected for the ceremonies. Former Governors Donald DiFrancesco and James Florio were invited to represent the New Jersey Government, while Vice Consul of Italy Paolo Toschi and Honorary Vice Consul of Italy Dr. Gilda Rorro were invited to represent the Italian Government in New Jersey. The keynote speaker selected was Brigadier General Paul S. Izzo, the commander of New Jersey's Picatinny Arsenal. General Izzo provided a moving speech honoring the service men and woman in the US military, recognizing the contributions of Italian American soldiers and police forces.

## **Ceremonies**

Given the sensitive nature of the event, the ceremonies were designed to incorporate the honoring of the colors with the appropriate honor guards. For the Italian Government, the Association of Italian Carabinieri from New York were invited to bear the Italian colors in full uniform. For the American Government, the Rutgers University Army ROTC officer-candidates were invited, specifically to pay tribute to General Izzo. Finally, from the New Jersey State Government, an honor guard from the New Jersey Parole Officers were invited to carry the New Jersey flag. Entrance ceremonies included the posting of the colors and the singing of the national anthems of each country, followed by pledges of allegiance from each country.

Introductory remarks were minimized to provide time for the various guest speakers and a presentation ceremony was designed by Committee Chairman Mario Marano. The Commission issued commendations in the form of plaques to the Italian American War Veterans organization, the Italian American Police Society of New Jersey, the Association of Italian Carabinieri and General Izzo.

## **Attendees**

The event was attended by over 120 Italian and Italian American citizens. Extremely positive feedback was received from the attendees regarding the ceremonies, the speakers and the selection of music. The government officials present noted the dignity and sensitivity of the ceremonies. The event was successful as persons attended from all parts of New Jersey.

## **PROGRAM OF EVENTS**

### **Entrance Prelude: “Armed Forces Medley and March”**

*Italian American Marching Band of Ocean/Monmouth Counties*

### **9:30am Honor Guard Procession of the Flags**

*US Army ROTC Honor Guard from Rutgers University*

*New Jersey State Parole Honor Guard*

*Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri D'Italia Honor Guard*

### **9:35am National Anthems**

**Mr. Nino Rossano**, accompanied by Mr. Stephen T. Berger

### **9:40am Welcome and Acknowledgements**

**Mr. A. Roger Marinzoli**, *Commission Executive Director*

### **9:45am Opening Remarks**

**The Honorable James J. Florio**, *Former Governor of NJ*

### **9:55am Musical Interlude: “Remembering Italy”**

**Mr. Joseph Coco**, *Italian American Performing Artist*

### **10:05am Address from the Republic of Italy**

**Vice Consul Paolo Toschi**

*Vice Consulate of the Republic of Italy in Newark*

### **10:15am Poetry Recitals: “L’Italia Dei Padri”**

**Cav. Alessandro Vettori**, *Professor of Italian at Rutgers University*

### **10:25 Musical Interlude: “Un Italiano Fiero”**

**Dr. Richard Sorrentino**, *Italian Language Educator*

### **10:35am Keynote Address**

**Brigadier General Paul S. Izzo**, *Commander of the Picatinny Arsenal*

### **10:45am Presentation of Commendations**

**Mr. Mario A. Marano**, *Commissioner*

*President Antonio Ferri, Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri D'Italia*

*President William Schievella, Italian American Police Society of NJ*

*State Commander John Stefane, Italian American War Veterans of the U.S.*

## **FORTHCOMING STATE EVENTS**

### **Tuesday, May 17, 2005: Italian Commercial and Cultural Conference**

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission is co-sponsoring the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual New Jersey World Trade Council entitled “ITALY: Capitalizing on Commercial Opportunity and a Rich Cultural Heritage”. This Tri-State Area commercial and cultural conference is taking place at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany, New Jersey. Speakers and panelists include Governor Richard Codey, the Italian Consul Generals of New York and Philadelphia, the Director of the Italian Trade Commission, Secretary Virginia Bauer of the NJ Commerce Commission, the Chairman of the Port Authority and a large number of private sector companies. All Italian Americans of New Jersey are strongly encouraged to attend this major event, in order to learn about the increasing commercial and cultural exchange opportunities between New Jersey and Italy. A number of educators and cultural specialists also will be in attendance. The price of a ticket is \$150, a portion of which will be used to sponsor the Commission’s Italian educational and cultural exchange programs. For exhibition tables and advertising opportunities, please contact the Commission at 732-932-0670. To help send Italian American university students from NJ to the conference for \$150, please contact the Commission at 732-932-0671.

### **Thursday, September 15, 2005: Film Premiere Gala**

The new documentary film “The Italian Americans of New Jersey: A Legacy of Achievement”, co-produced by the New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation and NJN will premiere at a Film Gala at the Mountain Lakes Villa in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. This major event for New Jersey’s Italian American community also will feature an evening of regional Italian wine-tasting, Italian and Italian American art auctions, a six-course gourmet dinner and the screenings of “The Italians of New Jersey”, as well as coming attractions for future documentaries. The cost of a ticket is \$250 per person for a splendid evening affair, a first look at the movie and the opportunity to network with leaders of NJ’s Italian American community. Please contact the Commission’s offices at 732-932-0670 to reserve tickets, as seating is limited.

## **Universality of Italian Heritage Curriculum**

In the Fall of 2004, the Commission launched a Pilot Curriculum Project named “The Universality of Italian Heritage” for the New Jersey School system. This test program is reaching over 7,000 students in eleven districts from North to South, in an effort to infuse existing school subjects with the contributions of Italians and Italian Americans. Phase I of the curriculum is designed for grades 6-12 students of all backgrounds in varying subjects such as US and World history, Sciences, Art and Language Arts. This September, the Commission will be testing Phase II of the project, which is designed for K-5 students. In order to roll this project out to all 600 school districts in the State, the Commission will need the support of the Italian American community of New Jersey. For more information about this program – and how to bring it to your school district – please contact the Commission’s offices at 732-932-0670.

## Italy and New Jersey

Italy's rich history generated monumental achievements that exerted a tremendous and lasting influence on the subsequent development of Western civilization and global history. The ancient, medieval, Renaissance, modern and 20<sup>th</sup> century periods of the Italian past gave birth to thinkers, inventors, artists and leaders in diverse fields such as civics, art, literature, science, technology, medicine, economics, philosophy, theology, engineering, architecture, music, cuisine, fashion and language. Few nations can lay claim to the wealth and diversity of contributions of the Italian people.

The legacy of these achievements and contributions of Italians continued from the Old World into the New World. During the formative years of the United States, Italian immigrants influenced the creation of the American Republic and contributed to the development of the economy, society and the arts. Today, Italian Americans have risen to the highest levels of government, business, education, arts and science.

The State of New Jersey is home to many individuals who are proud to call themselves Italian Americans. The 2000 census counted over 1.5 million citizens in New Jersey claiming Italian ancestry, but recent estimates deem that number to be approximately 2 million. Most of New Jersey's universities have Italian language programs and over 300 public school districts have certified Italian language teachers. Italy serves as New Jersey's top 10 export markets, with \$2.4 billion exported to Italy in the last four years. New Jersey also captures much of Italy's \$25 billion worth of annual imports to the United States through its airports, port facilities and free trade zones. Many Italian citizens today still move to New Jersey for academic, professional or familial reasons and an even larger number of New Jersey citizens travel to Italy to study, visit families, tour the Italian peninsula or search their ancestral roots.

With younger generations of New Jersey Italian Americans seeking to keep their heritage alive, the bonds of history, family and friendship between Italy and New Jersey can continue to strengthen and flourish

### Liberation Day Dedication

*"Today, the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and its partner organizations pay tribute to the brave men and women of Italian descent who have served in the United States military and New Jersey's police forces. The 2 million Italian Americans of NJ are deeply grateful for the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform and, upon this day, we remember their contributions. It is fitting and proper to honor our brothers and sisters on the day that our fellow Italians commemorate the Liberation of Italy, to remember our common bonds of friendship."*

*N. Larry Paragano*

**Chairman, New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission**

## PROGRAM OF EVENTS

### 11:00am Musical Interlude: "Reunion and Remembrance"

**Ms. Annamaria Stefanelli**, *Italian American Lyric Soprano*

*"Un Bel Di" from Puccini's Madama Butterfly*

*"Va Pensiero" from Verdi's Nabucco with audience participation*

### 11:10am Closing Remarks

**Dr. Gilda Rorro**, *Commissioner*

*Honorary Vice Consul of the Republic of Italy in Trenton*

### 11:15am Musical Closings: "Songs of Italy"

**Mr. Nino Rossano**, accompanied by Mr. Steven Berger

### 11:30am Film: "Italians of New Jersey-A Legacy of Achievement"

*Production of the NJ Italian American Heritage Foundation and NJN*

## Overview of Ceremonies

Italian Liberation Day, also known as the Celebration of the Resistance in Italy ("Festa della Resistenza"), is celebrated on April 25<sup>th</sup> of each year in Italy. This historic day memorializes Italy's proclamation of a national popular rising against German occupation forces and the remnants of Mussolini's Fascist Government, which were defeated through the combined efforts of Allied military forces and the Italian Resistance. It is a day of celebration, but also of mourning and remembrance as over 312,000 Allied troops and over 100,000 Italian citizens lost their lives in fighting for a free, democratic Italy.

For Italians, the Liberation of Italy vindicated the virtues of justice, liberty, solidarity and democracy. On this day, the values of the Risorgimento, that historical process of unifying Italy, is again celebrated. On this day, the more than 400,000 Resistance fighters and supporting civilians are remembered for their hardships and struggles in bringing Italy back into the league of free nations. And on this day, Italians remember their bond of friendship and their shared common values with the citizens and government of the United States.

For Americans, Italian Liberation Day is a day to remember the sacrifices born by the soldiers and citizens of the United States in the Second World War. This year, the Commission and its partner organizations also honor those men and women of Italian descent in New Jersey who have served, and are still serving, in our military and police forces. Italian Liberation Day in New Jersey has become part of this State's Italian American Risorgimento, where Italian Americans unite together to celebrate their common ancestry and commemorate those who have gone before.

## **Italian Liberation Day History**

Under Benito Mussolini, the Italian government allied with Germany and other Axis Powers during World War II. In the afternoon of July 25, 1943, Italy's formal sovereign, Victor Emmanuel III, dismissed Benito Mussolini as chief of the government and ordered his arrest. Marshall Badoglio was called to preside at a Government Cabinet mainly formed by professionals. Meanwhile, Italian opponents of the fascist regime applied pressure for the immediate elimination of fascism, separation from Germany, and the pursuit of an armistice with the Allied governments to reach a separate peace treaty later. In response to the Italian government's moves to remove Mussolini from power, Hitler occupied Italy.

The governments of the United States and Great Britain responded to the dismissal of Mussolini by requiring Italy to surrender unconditionally to the Allied Forces. This Anglo-American request for unconditional surrender made negotiations more difficult and protracted, and it was decided that the Allies should enter Italy and that the armistice should be announced around the middle of September. As German forces fortified positions, the Allied troops moved to land in Sicily.

In September, 1943, as Allied Forces continued landings in Sicily, the Italian Resistance began to form partisan units all over Italy to support the expulsion of German occupation forces. The Resistance was created not merely as a military force, but a wide political movement that expressed national regeneration and rejected fascism and Nazism. It was a movement of workers, fighters, peasants and priests.

On September 12, a German raid freed Mussolini from the jail in which he had been imprisoned. On his arrival in Munich, Germany, Mussolini reconstituted the Fascist Party, proclaiming allegiance to his former republican and socialist programs while laying the blame for the defeat on betrayers and saboteurs. From this program, on September 23, the "Italian Social Republic" was formed under the German Army occupation. Meanwhile, in the South, a government led by Badoglio was constituted. This provisional government declared war on Germany on September 13 and was acknowledged as a "co-belligerent" by the Allies.

The advance of the Allied armies towards the North was stopped for the first time during the winter 1943-1944 on the "Gustav Line" and the second time during the winter 1944-1945 on the "Gothic Line". After an adjustment phase during the first winter, the partisan fight joined with this advance and, after Rome's liberation, became more active with the consequent formation of the National Liberation Committee and the assignment of special powers in regard to Northern Italy, which was still under German occupation.

The spring of 1945 brought the renewal of the war activity on every front of the European zone; in Italy the breaking of the "Gothic Line" took place. The Allied armies, with the participation of the Italian Liberation Corps and the partisan brigades, broke into the Padana Valley. On April 25, the Volunteers Corps for Freedom ordered the popular rising, which is commemorated today as Italian Liberation Day. On May 6, 1945, Germany surrendered.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **Sponsoring Organizations**

New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission  
New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation  
Italian American Police Society of New Jersey  
Cav. Bianchi Lodge #2654, Order of the Sons of Italy in America  
The Federation of Italian Societies of New Jersey  
Ocean County United Italian American Club  
Seaside Italian American Club  
The Ribera Italian American Club  
Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO  
The Coccia Institute

### **Italian Statewide Events Planning Committee**

Mr. Mario A. Marano, *Commissioner*  
Mr. William Schievella and Mr. Alfonse Imperiale  
Mr. Bob Bonsignore and Mr. Doug Placa  
Mr. Pasquale Meola, Ms. Susan LaMorte and Mr. Salvino Balducci  
Mr. Paul Rinaldi and Mr. George Marretta  
Mr. Robert Bianchi  
Mr. Sebastian Russo  
Mr. Angelo Bio  
Mr. Joseph Coccia and Dr. Gina Miele

### **Ceremonies**

Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri D'Italia  
US Army ROTC Color Guard at Rutgers University  
New Jersey State Parole Honor Guard

### **Musical Performances**

Mr. Nino Rossano & Mr. Steven Berger  
Ms. Annamaria Stefanelli & Ms. Catherine Scott  
Mr. Joseph Coco  
Mr. Richard Sorrentino  
Mr. John Luckenbill  
Ocean & Monmouth County Italian Marching Band

### **Facilities**

Rutgers The State University  
Douglass College

## The Italian National Anthem: Inno di Mameli (1847)

Fratelli d'Italia  
L'Italia s'è desta  
Dell'elmo di Scipio  
S'è cinta la testa.  
Dove'è la Vittoria?  
Le porga la chioma;  
Chè schiava di Roma  
Iddio la creò.  
Stringiamoci a coorte,  
Siam pronti alla morte:  
Italia chiamò!

Noi siamo da secoli  
Calpesti e derisi,  
Perchè non siam popolo,  
Perchè siam divisi;  
Raccogliaci un'unica  
Bandiera, un speme;  
Di fonderci insieme;  
Già l'ora suonò.  
Stringiamoci a coorte,  
Siam pronti alla morte:  
Italia chiamò!

Italian brothers,  
Italy has arisen,  
With Scipio's helmet  
binding her head.  
Where is Victory?  
Let her bow down,  
For God has made her  
The slave of Rome.  
Let us gather in legions,  
Ready to die!  
Italy has called!

We for centuries  
Have been downtrodden and derided,  
Because we are not a people,  
Because we are divided.  
Let one flag, one hope  
Bring us together;  
The hour has struck  
For us to join forces.  
Let us gather in legions,  
Ready to die!  
Italy has called!

## Va, Pensiero: From Verdi's Nabucco (1851)

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate;  
va, ti posa sui clivi, sui colli  
ove olezzano tepide e molli  
l'aure dolci del suolo natal!  
Del Giordano le rive saluta,  
di Sionne le torri atterrate.  
Oh, mia patria sì bella e perduta!  
Oh, membranza sì cara e fatal!  
Arpa d'or dei fatidici vati,  
perché muta dal salice pendi?  
Le memorie nel petto raccendi,  
ci favella del tempo che fu!  
O simile di Solima ai fati  
traggi un suono di crudo lamento,  
o t'ispiri il Signore un concento  
che ne infonda al patire virtù!

Fly, thought, on wings of gold,  
go settle upon the slopes and the hills  
where the sweet airs of our  
native soil smell soft and mild!  
Greet the banks of the river Jordan  
and Zion's tumbled towers.  
Oh, my country, so lovely and lost!  
Oh, remembrance so dear yet unhappy!  
Golden harp of the prophetic wise men,  
why hang so silently from the willows?  
Rekindle the memories in our hearts,  
tell us about the times gone by!  
Remembering the fate of Jerusalem  
play us a sad lament  
or else be inspired by the Lord  
to fortify us to endure our suffering!



## **Italian Liberation Day** *COMMEMORATION*

**Honoring Italian American Military and Police  
Forces from New Jersey**

*Nicholas Music Center  
Douglass College  
Rutgers University*

**April 23, 2005  
9:00 AM**

**Coordinated by  
The NJ Italian & Italian American  
Heritage Commission**